Saint Thomas Church
New York City

New exposed pipework
of the Aeolian-Skinner organ,
the final achievement
of the late G. Donald Harrison
Numerous reactions become the recollection pattern for most who attend conventions. Saturated ears, aching arches, disrupted digestions, and an overwhelming desire to sleep indefinitely are a few of the "occupational hazards" with which one gets thoroughly acquainted. The impact of the magnitude of the Sixtieth Anniversary AGO Convention, which had your editor reeling throughout the week following (and not from what you’re thinking, either), deserves some editorial remarks. That those in charge planned a 5-day-long program of almost fantastic scope is admitted. That the general tenor of quality in the individually too-long programs was something to be unqualifiedly praised, is not admitted. As one friend of mine so aptly put it: “This was more a New York than a national convention.” The New York scene was remarkably full, if not exactly intelligently in all cases, displayed I use the word advisedly.

As though previous national conventions had not more than proved the point, the New York affair ineradicably showed that the point of saturation was reached, and passed, long ago. Future convention program planners take heed! For heaven’s sake give the registrants a break occasionally. The frantic efforts of program planners who obviously feel their sole predication is the utter requirement to best (7) what has gone before is as stupid as it is futile. Let us have done with schedules affording five and six events a day. People can only take and assimilate just so much and the agenda far exceeded this limit.

There was another aspect shown during the convention which “unhappily” me to quite some extent. To judge from “services” presented, the concert emphasis far exceeds any stress upon worship or liturgy. Is this a true picture of what a service should be? To throw in everything but a group of trained soloists is no valid basis for service planning—even for a festival service. The real raison d’être—and the AGO motto—Salus Deo Gloria—are not accomplish ed or fulfilled in this kind of thinking.

And what about all those who came from afar, for whom this trip to the biggest city in the world may well have been a once-in-a-lifetime event? Unless they purposely turned their backs on some events, they certainly had no time for getting acquainted with our city. I think that’s too bad.

On the other hand, I have every reason to believe that those responsible for the convention programs and agenda were sincere and well-meaning, if over-zealous, in their attempt to include every conceivable type of thing of interest to registrants (of which there were some 1,500—the biggest attendance in history). I take off my hat to them. They deserve great credit, individually and collectively. From the always graceful and smiling host, Dean Robert Baker, on through each and every official and person who literally slaved to make the convention possible, a resounding cheer.

The reviews and commentaries on following pages, so able and willingly accomplished by an invited special staff of reporters have our grateful, hearty and humble thanks. TAO takes pride in these people who were so willing to give of their talents and energies that this special issue could be made possible. Mildred Andrews—Alastair Cassels-Brown—Jack Fisher—Howard Kersey—Leslie Spalding—Laurence Swan—Ray Berry

AUGUST 1956
Sunday

HOW fortunate it was that a trip to West Point was provided for those arriving early enough to attend the opening concert of the season by the Army Choral Society, conducted by Mr. David, chapel organist. Having been quite famous for its unusual organs with well known vaudevillians, the chapel still attracts all viewers for sheer architectural beauty and incomparable setting. The building literally grows out of the side of the hill on which it stands, and Goodhue gave it that fortress-like touch which is so appropriate for a military chapel. The drive from New York to West Point wouldn't be too sedate, either, for the entire Hudson River area is one of the most majestic parts of the land.

Sunday afternoon recitals are the popular scene for the small town folk around West Point, so concertgoers plus the normal crowd absolutely jammed the chapel. Oddly, I had remembered the organ as being much more elaborate than it seemed during this program. It has everything on it except the proverbial kitchen sink (at all pitches), and yet it sounded remarkably subdued to me. It may seem a poor metaphor to some readers, but I was considerably more impressed with the windows than with the organ, while attentively I think the acousticm ought to balance.

I was singularly unperturbed with both the programming of the music and with Dr. Davie's playing. People, I think, do not attend AGO national conventions to hear such world-renowned groups, and if such groups would have been held, we would be considerably more satisfied for having better played. There were indeed moments of evil charm, particularly in the middle section of the Mozart, and in the Chasney Ballad, but the general effect to me was that of a big splash of colors. I see no reason for such chronic playing of the St. Aloysius Prelude and Fugue, for there are too many performances of it which are technically unexciting. I couldn't help but think of the old days when hearers of the Car West Point had to spend so many days merely locating all of the top stops (some of which were literally under the bench), while now the average organist now plays with a cleaner, more concise tone. All in all, however, it was a delightful program to hang the gigantic instance of great effect and musical delight.

J. F.

St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University
Organist: New York City [Clarence Snyder, conductor]
Ruth Davis, soprano; Beatrice Knob, contralto; Julia McCollum, alto; Clarita Waters, baritone; Rowland Smith, bass; Robert Eismeier, organist.

The Green Bells Rite
Ruth Davis
We Honor the Disciple who was the First to Teach

Monday

After the looked-forward to reunion and greetings of early arrivals at the 1958 AGO National Convention, we reluctantly braved the intense heat of a New York City Sunday evening and located ourselves in Columbia University's St. Paul's Chapel for a stinging program of choral music.

As the music progressed, so did the heat, and I'm certain there was no one in that congregation who did not wish unlimited trolleys to the New Jersey Choral Society for their magnificent presentation amid such sweltering conditions. Having shed jackets, coats, and every other permissible garment within at least the first five minutes, not one of us would have wanted to exchange places with the howling robed chorus. I have always read in the instruction books that such conditions are not conducive to good singing, but the performance by the Society defies all of this by being one of the finest I have ever listened to. Their precision was remarkable, dynamic control, arresting masterful, and their interpretative powers were not at all inhibited by these poor conditions.

The tone quality of the Society is well balanced, and all of their efforts were seemingly attained with the utmost grace. After having lived in and about New York for seven years, it seemed amazing to me that neither I nor anyone else I met had heard of this society before...although it is much less to our credit due to them, I am sure—but if, this performance is to be taken as a criterion of their abilities, future glory is surely in store for them.

In regards to the above, I am implying special thanks to the conductor of the Choral Society, Mr. Clarence Snyder, for, although none of the performance was conducted by him, the singing is more than the result of his competent training. The fact that the chorus could achieve so fine a program under three different conductors in one performance is even more to their credit and has credit. Not even all symphony orchestras can do this, and they usually have more experience in the matter. Mr. Snyder played all of the accompaniments on the organ, and I must say that his playing was at interesting and masterful in the performance of his chorus.

If I had arranged the program I think that I would have exchanged the second and third selections. Searle Wright's Great Blue Period would have made a natural finish and climax to the Concerto by the Organists, by Frank Schreier. After all, Esaiu's did follow the Crusaders, and the Sibert piece would have gone down better and more as a Preus (his timing quality was one due to the heat).

Elmore's Three embroideries began the program with added effect; they exhibit good writing, excellent singability, and are extremely expressive of the text—a very fortunate selection for the concert. Wright's 'Green Blaze' is a good piece, although a bit stately, and has gone charm, particularly in the Picalual Dance, called 'Hilarious.' Both Elmore's and Schreier's compositions were written to form and structure, not to mention effective part-writing. Schreier's 'Concettino' reached its best self in the executives, and even there the writing was really rather good. To me, was quite in from, and gave the effect of wildish melody.

It would not do to stop mention of the conducting of these works; each composer for his own composition, and it was a genuine treat to hear such excellent work. I could hardly believe that three such splendid conductors could appear in one program. Incidentally, the first big laugh of the concert occurred at the end of Elmore's composition: we heard sound like a whisper from the organ and thought, 'Oh, dear!' which was quite a laugh. As we approached, and passed, then the piece resumed with a missed chuckle as we realized the chorus had just swung the words, 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?'

I am going to risk a criticism by stating that the convention rgbed disaster in scheduled to be held in St. Paul's Chapel. I felt the setting was entirely inappropriate, for its size, acoustical properties, and organ are distinctly out of character for an oratorio prop. Although I once disliked it, I now agree that Lowell Beesley was correct in choosing the choral music and the Recitativo mass. There if the New York City Chapter AGO wished to preview the convention with such a big bang as a concert does, it should have been held somewhere else. A less critic audience that the conventionaries would have scoured the Choral Society for a jumbled mass of sound, when actually they gave remarkable precision and climax. Also, each of the setting and organ accomplishment seemed to draw a loud and big-hearted ovation, when in reality the procedure of the band merely amplified it so five times what it ought to have been. The audience were perhaps the most out of place, with their special type of dress which did not belong in such a setting. Ruth Davis was the only one who seemed really cognizant of this matter, and even her tasteful style was

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST
somewhat distorted by so much reiteration.

Three cheers to the New Jersey Choral Society, to the three conductors, to Clarence Snyder, to the awed audience—and a raised eyebrow to the planners who misplotted this program in St. Paul’s Chapel.

J. F.

THE technical ability of the 12 contestants in the finals of Student Competition in Organ-Playing was impressive. They played with accuracy, remarkable assurance and poise. However, this technical skill often seemed to be an end in itself, rather than a means of expressing music. Too many of them showed the results of being pushed technically far beyond their musical understanding. Speed and brilliance should not be the aim, but rather musical expression. Such contestants develop one side of an organist’s talent and leave undeveloped other aspects that are needed by church musicians. I wonder if these contests are in keeping with the purpose of the American Guild of Organists?

L.P.S.

As unofficial spokesman for the music judges, of which I was one, Dr. Spelman accepted TAQO’s invitation to make comment upon this competition. As a prelude to dispassionate reporting, his remarks bore thought for all who would have connection with future efforts of similar nature. The Latter.

St. Thomas Church, New York: Pierre Cochereau

Suite No. 2

Clementi

Symphony No. 2

Vierne

Prelude and Fugue on the name "Alain"

Franck

Symphonic Poem: Evocation

Dukas

Tripticque Impression on given themes

Pierre Cochereau, distinguished organist of Notre Dame, Paris, was heard twice on consecutive days. As a symbol of this event he dedicated the newly installed organ in sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark (see TAQO, April 1956), Sunday evening, June 24. The beauty of the cathedral was matched by playing which was obviously "at home" in a large structure. Aside from the opening Bach B minor Prelude and Fugue, M. Cochereau’s program was of French composers from Vierne forward to a four-movement Symphonie Variation on the "Pange Lingua,", which was heard in its entirety.

M. Cochereau’s recital, which was part of the official opening of the A.G.O. convention held in St. Thomas Church, followed the customary opening remarks and greetings by appropriate official. In this performance, M. Cochereau devoted himself entirely to French composition. The artist dedicated his recital to the memory of the late G. Donald Harrison, being the last opus of a great organ builder.

In retrospect, these two performances, coming so closely together, were not perhaps the best scheduling for the artist, in consideration of music chosen at least—and most especially for the many who attended both recitals. Quite simple was just too simple; French—music and playing. This is not to say Frenchmen should not lean heavily on the music of their own country. Rather, that two programs too close together engendered a surfeit.

Cochereau is a mature artist, in full command of his considerable talents, who is as loyal as several of his colleagues in presenting the French scene. I’ve at times wished U.S. organists playing in foreign countries were as loyal to our native composers in like proportion.

M. Cochereau’s Newark improvisation was a considerably more costly, more intimate event than that in New York, which will not be construed as adverse comment on the artist. Just how often can a well-woven structure be made from three disparate themes? Despite this, and the obvious obstacle of one of those themes beginning with G-D-(B flat) (Mr. Harrison’s initials), Cochereau produced a mood-provoking structure of enormous scope based on the themes sketched by Robert Baker, Seth Bingham and Clarence Watters, which carried to heights the tradition of improvisation so dear to the French. According to reports from some sitting in the rear of St. Thomas Church, the sudden inclusion of the west gallery “Trompette-en-Chamade” was starting to say the least.

I could scarcely finish comment on this opening event without mentioning that never has an AGO convention started off with such a bang! I hasten to add, for those not in attendance, that the “bang” was some blasting of sub-level rooms in the excavating going on just to the south of the church. The effect was as effective as it was perfectly (if accidentally) timed.

R.B.

St. Bartholomew’s Church, New York: Built Festival Concert, organists: Harold Friedell, Reinhold Schelling, David Hewlett, organist.

Langlais

Satie: Magnificat

Soeur Philomene

Jansen: Passacaille

Satie: Prelude

Nagl: Coronation Te Deum

Karg-Elert

Fage, Kastanie and Epilogue

Karg-Elert

Fage, Kastanie and Epilogue (organ, oboe and women’s voices)

Pierre Cochereau’s participation in this service was chosen for the opening service of the Festival of the Organ. The program of the Service by Vierne was a resounding success. It was heard by all in the sanctuary, and in the audience. The music is being received much too much importance.

Soewby’s Magnificat and Nunc dimittis were splendid. The first anthem, Jesus so lovely, by Fjellstad, was very charming and simple. The second anthem, a setting of the Magnificat by Dorhøj, was most lovely, though from where I was sitting the sopranos overbalanced the basses. It is an appealing work, not particularly dramatic, yet very much in the tradition of Vierne’s sweetness. It is based on planning themes, on this account, I couldn’t help regretting that the work wasn’t more apparently mystical.

The singing from the Choir was most cordial. He stressed the value of good music in worship and hoped that those present would relay his appreciation to their own churches.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was represented by his arrangement of “Old Hundredth” and his setting of the Festival Te Deum. The postlude, Fage, Kastanie and Epilogue by Karg-Elert, for organ, voices and women’s voices, was ably directed by David Hewlett, and I also enjoyed the warm and sensitive playing of Eugene Dettling.

A.C.B.
Tuesday

St. Thomas Church
Choral Morning Prayer; St. Thomas, Church Choir of boys and men
William Self, organist and master of the choir; Edward A. Wallace, service organist; David R. Fuller, organist

Choral in German

Nun seid erlöst
Burnham, after Bach

Aria on the Annunciation
Adoramus te, Christe
Veni Redemptor Gentium
Alma redemptoris Mater

A story for
Grace out of the Holy Spirit
Music of Bach
I will not leave you comfortless
Hymns of Bach
Widor

S

OON after arrival at the convention, nearly everyone was aware that St. Thomas Church represented several "firsts"—the new and splendid organ, a new rector, new organist and master of the choristers, new headmaster of the choir school, and lastly, the new construction going on outside the church—on both sides of it.

Having exploded the convention's opening racial with a big bang next door, we continued, in successive events there, to be startled time and again with the blues, until we finally marvelled that they did not knock the organ out of tune—or, perhaps, but explanations or my everyone I met was duly appreciative of the magnificent new organ and with the church in general.

The fact is, St. Thomas is indeed an ideal church. Architecturally, it is a triumph of the well-known Gudhiae form, the windows are equally monumental, it has great resources for music, music, the choir school is one of those fortunate and rare institutions seldom to be found in American churches. The church has consistently maintained good music leadership, from Dr. Noble through Dr. Goodwyn, to the present, with Mr. William Self. The organ is probably one of the most significant instruments of our time, and is a tribute to the church, to Mr. Self for his foresight in such preserves, and to the late Mr. G. Donald Hoseman.

There was only one minor explosion to mar the grandeur of the Franks & sonor, played by David R. Fuller, and thus the service was off to a most impressive beginning. The present choristers fortunately has instituted silent Processions for the choir, and thus it entered in churchy manner. From this, the whole service proceeded to the end in a most successful manner. To be true, the service was festive, and in one sense was designed to exhibit the choir, but an effect of reserve and devotion was yet maintained throughout.

For those who may be reasonably unfamiliar with the Anglican Service, may I point out that this was a Choir Office of definitely English type, which implies mainly that the music is for the choir and not necessarily for the congregation, excepting the hymns. In such choir-services, those responses, which theoretically ought to be participated in by the congregation, are sung by the choir in 4-part harmony, the Canticles are sung in anthem form, and so on. These customs naturally derive from the Choir Offices as they are sung daily in English cathedrals, and in their English setting quite logically ignore congregational participation, for generally there is no congregation present, at most a handful. When the Office is sung in such a setting as the Guild convention, it might be argued that more congregational participation might be encouraged by way of unison Responses, congra-
gional-choral Canticles, and so on; but, this being a festive service, as well as including many non-Anglicans among the worshippers, the effect of choir emphasis was not altogether out of order.

I would, however, question the election of the music programmed. With such an incompatible building, and with so progressive an organ, the music was not all on a par with these two factors. Instead of achieving a carolling quality in music, the Victorian Canticles and anthems near the end seemed to date the whole idea of the music instead of meet-

ing the progressive and universal aspect of the organ. Thus a musical and almost philosophical conflict.

In this light, I also question the doubling of the bass notes in the Choir Responses, and in certain of the Renais-
sance motets. It is wonderful to have such good low basses, but when they double in the wrong place, the voice is distort-
ed. It was more refreshing to hear the Herzogenberg "Calmus Thou," being one of the few pretentious, Romantic unic-
compופted anthems in existence worth the trouble it takes to prepare it. I hope more good choirs can add it to their repertoire. All of the Renaissance music was well done, although I could have stood a bit happier pace in nearly every one of them.

The choir has a good balance, and (everyone please take note) Mr. Self uses boy alto exclusively—not a contra-tenor in the bunch. The boys have what might be described as a Viennese tone, being extremely bright and somewhat edgy. I prefer a more fluttery tone, but there are all types of tone and this is Mr. Self's present and good providence.

The hymn "St. Arin" was taken at a funereal and unsing-
able pace, this was ameliorated by an introduction, interesting, descant, free accompaniments and trumpet fanfare, all by Norman Coke-Jephcott—a dazzling embellishment which stuck me as a waltzing for of a good thing, but most im-
pressive. Mr. Self informed me that the hymn-tempo was slowed down to the most acceptable playing of the f
twre for the gallery Trompette-en-Chalume, which I still think makes it unsingable.

It was a refreshing break to attend this service in St. Thomas, for it was the only church service in the convention which maintained a religious atmosphere. The greatest show of the night was achieved by other churches, and I'm thankful that St. Thomas at least held out for the spirit and splendor of the Guild: Soli Deo Gloria.

A word of thanks might very well be in order for the Vestry of St. Thomas Church, in that they, too, were respon-
dent to the crowd['s] choir school had unbroken earlier. For the season, the Vestry brought back the entire choir, at a great financial expense (some of the boys had to return from considerable distances), and so we see that the service was produced at great effort. Congratulations to Mr. Self for his first work, to Mr. Fuller for the Franks, and to Mr. Edward A. Wallace for his fine playing of the service.

J. F.
The Riverside Church: Donald MacDonald and George Faxon

Kyrke, God, Holy Spirit
Jesu Christ, our Saviour
We thank him, Lord, for giving
Introduction, Pascacaglia and Fugue
Donald MacDonald

Fantasy
Fugue
Pavane
Suite for Viola
Schott Fantasia
Prenez Liturgique
DANCES FROM RUSSIA
Toccata

George Faxon

DONALD MACDONALD and GEORGE FAXON, sharing the resources of the organ in the Riverside Church, gave to the convention a highly individual musical experience. McDonald's clean, crisp, sparkling Bach—his sense of proportion and scope in Willem's Introduction, Pascacaglia and Fugue' rate him in my opinion as one of our more promising young artists, once he has added to his already well-developed talents a greater maturity of approach to music, as such. Nonetheless, he makes a recital exciting. I hope his apparent sense of direction will not be swerved, nor will he allow to be misdirected.

Faxon's difficult and to some extent thankless task of performing a whole program of manuscripts by present-day American composers was accomplished with his customary aplomb and keen musicianship. I personally favored the playing over the music about 8 to 1.

I've no intention of making comments on the pieces singly other than to remark that one becomes more and more convinced that too many American organ music writers today reflect a restlessness which is rather disquieting—a mode of writing in which massive blocks of complex sound have almost completely taken the place of lucid, straight thinking, in manner and forms of composition proven acceptable (as guilelessly at least) and bent since the time of Bach. This does not imply any impediment to progress. It does indicate a far greater need for a more complete understanding of the past, that the future may be built upon it lucidly and intelligently. So-called modernism, for its own sake, is not necessarily synonymous with music which is music, truly.

R.B.

James Memorial Chapel, Union Theological Seminary
Chapel Choir of Union Theological Seminary: Hor Jones, director;
Robert Severy, dramatics director.
The Coming of Christ
A Mystery (Choral Drama)—text by John Masfield

THE COMING OF CHRIST, a verse play by John Masfield with music by Gustav Holst, was presented by Union Theological Seminary under the direction of Hor Jones, musical director, and Robert Severy, dramatics director.

This play, performed in Canterbury Cathedral in 1938, was the first of a series of plays presented in the cathedral in the belief that the art of drama should serve Christianity. (Luther thought along similar lines when he converted tavern songs into hymns because he didn't see why the devil should have all the best tunes.) In one sense, it constitutes a revival of the old Morality Play, in which actors personified virtues and vices, and, in another sense, the old Miracle plays which dramatized Biblical stories. The first source results in characters called The Power, The Sword, The Mercy, The Light, and Anima Christi, while the second leads to the inclusion of incidents at the incarnation like the coming of the Magi and the shepherds. Naturally, it has a message—a wonderful message—that on account of His great love for us, God freely chose to come among us and fulfilled complete re- jection that maskand might be saved.

The music is simple and effective, using the idiom of plainsong and folk tunes. The accompaniment of the plainsong is secure and makes an interesting contrast with, for example, the Dunald Regain, heard on Moonday. The play opens and closes with a trumpet call in which there is a suggestion of Adagio f adagio. The texture of the singing was not always clear, but the interpretation was light and sensitive.

The program was models of vocalizing and thrilling, but the bass was terrible!

Considerable pains were obviously taken to get the words across; however, much was lost before it reached the back of the hall, which was unfortunate considering the importance and beauty of the work.

The thing apart, from the coyness, is the hope that others will feel inspired to present this play, or similar plays, into their communities. The following list is taken from the program notes:

The Coming of Christ
Murder in the Cathedral
The Zeal of Thy House
The Joy of the Redeemed
The Farewell
Choral (Symphonic Romances)
Intron and Choral and Fugue (organ and brasses)

CHARLOTTE GARDEN, one of this country's leading recitalists, was presented in a highly unusual program in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine—a program which the acoustics of the building largely dictate.

This is not to say that organ music cannot be heard, and played, successfully in this particular venue, for I have heard others cope well with the highly spectac-ular approach demanded in so recreckenber an environment. I had the impression the artist, who is, had famed her vocal, technical and registrational design at the console, and without enough thought and understanding of what was happening a sixteenth of a mile away (this cathedral is an island in the midst of a irrigation)

The Stanley "London Suite" (to played from a manu- script arrangement by Gilman Chase) was considerably disappointing and left me feeling unsatisfied. The same might be said for the Gabrielli music fear breezes, in which true antiphonary simply was not achieved, for the listen- er. In fact, I was so filled with confusion that I departed after Wytton's "Euphania," written for his organ by a man who thoroughly understands the demands of so high an acoustic. This piece (which is a mighty effective thing), incidentally, was dedicated to the late Mr. G. Donald Harrison, who, upon learning this, remarked that this was the one and only piece of music ever dedi- cated to him. It was Mr. Harrison who has designed and installed the StateTrumpet in this cathedral.

I only regret that Charlotte Garden's more than ample talent and fine musicianship for the most part was utterly wasted. I would hear her under different conditions. R.B.

The Riverside Church
Riverside Church Choir: Louie Natale, soprano; John Fleisch, baritone; brass and tympani ensemble; Richard Wexler, director; Viola Fox, organist.

The Divine Service

Since Thou art in our midst
Rex at magnificat in beata
Lo, the good Lord brings salvation.
Benedicamus
done nobis pacem.

This service in The Riverside Church was outstanding for the standard of organ playing and musical direc- tion. The opening organ prelude was played in

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST
memory of G. Donald Harrison, by Virgil Fox, and consisted of all Bach compositions. Masterly technique, musically phrasing and very fancy registration characterized the performance. Of the two choral works sung, the first was a Credo (first presentation) by Seth Bonghain, a highly interesting work of a dramatic nature. It was written, and performed, with great conviction.

This was followed by Durufle’s Suite, Opus 5, of which the second movement seemed to have an atmosphere of Au clair de la lune, and the last movement to consist of harmony and texture with a dash of excitement—and negative melody, which was probably intentional but gave the impression of...
dryness of Invention.

The main work in the service was Dona nobis pacem by Ralph Vaughan Williams, which was composed in 1956. Text is in six sections, contrasting the supplication, "Grant us peace," with "Wars and nations of war," in three poems by Whitman and one by Bright, and finally, the Promises of Peace taken from the Scriptures. The soprano solo in the first section was sung with true legato, diction, feeling and beautiful tone—a superb performance. In the first Whitman poem, "Blest hear! blest dream!—blest! blest! blest!" sung dramatically by the chorus, the trumpet solo was particularly effective. The organ accompaniments were flawless, though at times they tended to be a little loud. The second poem, "Word over all," is set as a flowing baritone solo which was most effectively sung; the composer elected to repeat the opening words at the end of the poem, perhaps for emphasis or possibly for formal balance. Moments in the movements were suggestive of The Seasons in Music, and the sixth movement, with its tranquil mood at the opening, and its entries of a falling theme, each rising above the last, compactly suggested the closing measures of the Fifth Symphony. Throughout both choral works, the choir sang magnificently, with precision, sweep, and interpretation.

It may not be fair of me to state here the comparison made between these choral works by Seth Bingham, himself, at the Forum on Composition, at which time he pointed out the difference in the two texts: the Credo's, dramatic and quickly changing—Dona nobis pacem, long, flowing, and unchanging.

After the Benediction, Mr. Fox played us out with what on the service sheet was referred to as a Silent Recessional. Members who attended the evening must have felt that here at the Riverside Church is to be found some of the finest music in New York.

SQUARE pegs in round holes might be the description of most organists faced with the monster generally referred to as the theatre organ. But, while most organists are square and only some are not, there was a large and expectant audience at the Paramount Theatre for what was dubbed the "Oddly Odd" (A good many of us do milk things with extraordinary thoroughness, at times, but apparently not too much effort took offence at the title, so the place was enthusiastically busier.) I might add that the points of interest in Times Square and vicinity do offer enough to keep interesting people busy until 2 am, so I was not surprised to see such a happy and large crowd. We were given a good and lovely demonstration on the powerful organ by Ray Bobo, who is one of the organists at the Radio City Music Hall. We were not at all bored, either, by the famous concert organists of Scarlitz Wright, who has made the organ theatre organ and a fine ability to entertain. Before going further, it should be mentioned that George Wright, who was to have been the star of the morning (1) was prevented from performing because of a broken shoulder resulting from an automobile accident recently. The party picked up with a promising roar at the entrance of Virgil Fox, the organist of New York's famous Riverside Church, who promptly added his usual zest and fun. The famous musician was almost immediately hushed by whistles and yells to the effect that he was commanded, if not requested, to try the old organ and make it dance; many requests were called out from all points in the theatre, not the least of which was from a loud, distinct voice from the balcony, who screeched, "Come, sweet death!" Quite apparently, the person belonging to this loud voice had all always wanted to hear Mr. Fox by his famous interpretation on a real theatre organ. But Mr. Fox graciously played himself down and called upon various people in the audience to play, until finally he gave in as a good sport and played a bit for us.

One of the most hilarious bits of fun was provided by a boy named "Roy" who gave us the funniest possible performance of "The Hababah" from Carmen. Scarlitz Wright gave the accompaniment for this.

It would have been very educational for all who think as organists is or must be square to play a theatre instrument, because we were delighted to hear the Paramount beast simply exploded and shown off by such masters (and I'm not kidding) as Earl Wright, Virgil Fox, and Richard Purvis. Pierre Cabezat was even attempting to play the saxophone, which turned out to be delightfully round and a damned good entertainer.

Mr. Purvis, it seemed to me, was most at home on the instrument, while all the others were good; but it was a man from Wright, named Ray Klize, who proved to be the real show. When he touched the keyboard, music leaped into action, and the whole theatre audience sat spellbound.

After his performance, there seemed to be very little else which could have further enhanced the demonstration; even the loud voice from the balcony didn't seem to want any more favorites, so we adjourned to early morning affairs.

J. F.

Wednesday

Central Presbyterian Church
Wilbur Hall, playing the 1957 AGO test pieces.

Bach
 Prelude and Fugue in E minor (Cathedral)

Bach
 Prelude in E minor

Mendelssohn
Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Bach
 Air with Variations

Allegro risoluto, Symphony No. 2

Vivace

ELBUR HEID showed a fine recital and set a good example in rhythm, technique, phrasing and registration.

The Moller organ sounded well balanced and compact and did its job well in the low pedal register. The Prelude on "Toplady" didn't have much to say, nor was there much interest for me in Variations on "Komm ersetzen Toel" by Schieler, which Mr. Held added at the end of his recital, while, on the other hand, the Sowerby Air with Variations was much more compelling.

There was less of appreciation and amusement when a roll of thunder coincided with the first pedal point in the Toccata, but if this was God playing the timpani then Mr. Held mistimed his climax a measure too late for the most resounding peal of all.

A. C. B.

Central Presbyterian Church
Forum on Teaching Methods and Materials: Harold Glossen and Catharine Crozier, co-chairmen; Alfred Andrews; Robert Northam; Leslie Spekman; Venne de Ser

TAO reports that the report of this event which was promised has not arrived by press time. However, it may be reported that the forum was so successful that it was repeated, by request, every Friday morning of convention week.

St. James Church
In Compositional and its Relation to Church Music: Otto Leuning, professor of music, Columbia University

THE Convention's Forum on Composition, with Otto Leuning, chairman, and Robert Crouell, Paul Cresson and Seth Bingham as panelists, was one of the

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST
MID sultry humidity at 3 pm, Mr. William B. Mitchell bade to undampen our spirits with a delightful and entertaining lecture on the philosophical aspect of the Guild Examinations, in relation to music-making in general. He emphasized that his was a philosophical, not a theoretical, approach. There is little need to comment on his lecture except to say that it was delightful and that I agree with any word of his!

His points were these:
1. The intellectual "junk" is unnecessary (e.g.: A 16th century composer's second and middle names);
2. That we should acquire the ability to handle our information, not just store it;
3. That the Guild is primarily an examining organization, a scene pieces required are somewhat inadequate, b. Pieces should really assess a student's ability, c. 19th century musicians composed as well as performed—and we should do the same today;
4. That our education should not end with examination;
5. That music theory should justify itself as it becomes a part of practice;
6. That the Guild Exams ought to include some test of a student's analytical abilities.

J. F.

ALEXANDER SCHREINER proved with the first phrases of his recital that he is still one of the most prolific composers. He has a fine technique which allows every phrase to be heard, the music is lively, and his execution of the music is so mature as to reward every listener with a considerable musical experience.

I can think of very little comment to make except that his recital was absolutely wonderful. I should question the program of some of his heavy works, all so similar in structure, on a 4:30 pm concert recital, during a month when New York City is likely to be exhaustedly hot. In effect, we heard three massive organ symphonies in a row, two of them made of five movements each.

J. F.

THE Lewiston Stadium concert, featuring as soloists, Claire Coe, organist of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, and George Thalben-Ball, organist of the B. B. C. Orchestra, London, was the ore concert event which the New York press designated to much extent, which is perhaps logical, all things considered as related to the total music scene in this great metropolis.

Handel's "Hallelujah Concerto" opened the evening and in some ways came off fairly well, despite the outside orchestral forces employed which, in point of historic style, threw the music out of kilter. Thalben-Ball, I do not choose to believe, is precisely enamored with electronic instruments, and consequently, his portions of the work did not come off with any particular life or sparkle. It was fine playing, yet sounding uninspired. This may have been due to the amplification, or to any number of other causes.

Claire Coe's performance of the DeLamarter Concerto was a tour de force and she was the star of the evening.
Thursday

Minter College Auditorium
S. Power Biggs, instrumental ensemble.

Baratello de'Orfeo
Balletto dei Filarmonici

Double Concerti in G (for two organists)
Concerto No. 10 in D minor
Fantasia for Organ (K. 594)
Adagio and Rinsbas for organ and quartet (K. 617)

Mozart:
Notturno for organ and strings
(K. 239, K. 242, K. 336)

Power Biggs, playing the portable Schlicker organ, was far more at home with the instrument than her British colleague, and took advantage to far greater degree of its possibilities. The instrument is clearly an ideal for chamber music. As a matter of taste, the instrument seemed to me to be a little colorless, and the pedal, which bristled like a hedgehog, was a bit too extreme for reconciliation, but the general effect was gentle and as charming as a carnation.

The concert was a refreshing change because it was chamber music, and finely performed.

A. C. B.

Christ Methodist Church

A Sa this was Prof. Sach's birthday, his audience greeted him singing the famous serenade for such occasions. He thanked us impressively from the pulpit. The speaker informed us that he had been asked by the committee to talk about his new book, Rhythm and Tempo, published by W. W. Norton & Co. He did not think it would be too interesting if he simply read it out, so he proposed to lecture on rhythm and tempo in the XVIII century.

He pointed out that, in the XVIII century, notation had a limited value and that the meanings of the notes were vague; even experts do not agree as to exact values. One reason for this was that the royalty and bourgeois of the times imposed their own tastes on music, which led to apparent contradictions. It was considered good taste to be indirect, and, to cite the case of the appoggiatura, it was mixed on purpose. Before a half-note, it was worth a quarter-note and received the accent—before a dotted half-note, the auxiliary received two quarter-notes; the accent is put on the arpeggio note, but this was easily explained by the use of appoggiatura in the figured bass, where it was essential for the continuo to know the true harmony note. Practice differed between different nations. To the Italians, "equal notes are equal," while to the French they were played in a ratio of 3:2. Both wrote sometimes in the French style, but also was strongly influenced by the Italians.

In the case of the dotted particle—which simply meant the lengthening of the preceding note and the shortening of the second—for a March or Minuet the second note was made as short as possible, while for an Adagio the ratio was 3:2. In the case of the dotted particle against a triple, the second note coincides with the third note of the triplet; this was a form of shorthand.

In the case of the double-dotted particle, Prof. Sachs said that we got into deep water and added, with a flash of his specialties, that it is easier to swim in deep water.

On the subject of phrases, he stated categorically that it meant being drowned in one head and free in the other. Even in Chopin, the left hand never yields.

Most challenging of all his statements was on the subject of tempo: "Now tempo is the spirit of the XIX century—Bach played extraordinarily fast." The Germans were faster than the French. Metronomes were used in France in the XVIII century; metronomic terms were recorded from 1694 on. The Manoir in France was taken at 70 for the measure. "Look at XVIII-century pictures," he said. "They are light; XVIII-century music must be light."

The question of showing down a cadence is a matter of taste. Bach is better without a cadence. Finally, Prof. Sachs pleaded with us not to call the XVIII century "old." Music was better, and the lecture on the challenging lecture could not but cause one to make a mental note to follow up the subject in the book. What higher praise is there than that? A. C. B.

Assembly Hall, Temple Bernoulli Forum. Choral Techniques and Repertories, Vancan de Tar, modera-
tor.

This forum, ably moderated by Vancan de Tar, included four speakers: Conal Vold, Margaret Hilt, Mil-
dred Marshall and Alec Wyman. Mr. Vold's opening remarks stressed a very serious approach to selection and per-
formance of choral music. Miss Hilt stressed the fact that expression of music in the music itself, wanted to be
war of gnomics. Miss Marshall curried the whole room
into a riot with her delightful exhibit of phonetics, good and bad (the latter, being such as 'garry me bag to ole Virginny'). Whereupon Alec Wyman described the forum as a four-movement symphony, with Miss Marshall's talk as a congruent Scherzo. He then concluded the forum (for reasons plus for characteristics) in the best music for Junior and Boy Choirs, saying that they are much brighter than we think they are. Space will, unfortunately, not permit a fuller development of the other splendid points brought out in the entirety of the forum, so charmingly presented by the four speakers.

J. F.

St. James Church
Concert of St. James and Oswald Beggs: Regale in 8 Flats [St. Anne].

Concert in G minor
Fantasia
Pavana
Litanies
Clarke Thomson

Alain

Concerto No. 5
Hans Jekel, claus, die ezte wend
Mun jemii, der Heiden Helleld
Sonnino

Pattinelli

Bach
Viradolfi-Bach
Neuherr
Elmore

Rogers-Dunce

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F

EVEN a somewhat cooler day, which brought us again to St. James' Church, was not necessary to aid the splendid recital by two fine performers. From the opening phrase of Miss Thomson's half of the program, she held her audience in that type of attention which illustrates all the arguments in favor of careful phrasing, steady rhythm and intelligent registrations. She allowed her music to breathe before phrases, and thus welded the music into the sincere expression of what was there.

There is a tremendous force and intensity in her playing, until I am sure everyone present would rank her among the best, on a par with other great women organists, so popular for the qualities I have mentioned above. The myth of inferiority in the finest art is fast being permanently exploded by the organ playing of such women as Cleliae Thomson.

We had hardly recovered from the beautiful playing above when Oswald Ragata began his half of the program. His technique, like that of Miss Thomson's, was exceptional, with meticulous attention to phrasing, nuance and style. His notes in registration were somewhat more interesting than Miss Thomson's, although this may have been simply because of the music played.

Registration here, at any rate, was merely a logical metric; to an end, not a vast color-pot or an end in itself. The only low point in the program came during the big part of the Roger-Durazzo, which I should say was too fast. The only person I have heard play it sensibly is Matthias March, and she takes it nearly twice as slow in this section; the effect is still electrifying, and the cleanness of notes is even more exciting than a faster clip. Mr. Ragata maintained the pace throughout, in spite of the middle section.

In the Sowerby piece at the end, he delighted me by being the only performer I have heard who made clear the main theme, beginning in the pedal—nearly everyone else makes the octave leap sound like one note.

My opinion is that this was the real high point of the competition, as far as recitals are concerned. Both performances were among the best I have ever heard.

J. F.

GEOE THRALL-BALI, organist of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and one of England's leading recitators, presented a recital on the newly-dedicated organ in Temple Emanu-El. This dully cooped up instrument, originally installed by Casavant, and rebuilt by Austin Organs, perhaps sounds about as well as it would with so much pressure placed. Judgments magnificently what happens when organ sound is forced to speak from one space into another.

Completely at home in the music of his countrymen, the Stanley and Russell pieces proved interesting "openers." His Bach was well considered but, for American tastes however, a bit dull.

Thrall-Ball gave magnificently dimension to the Rubke in an obviously organically-based conception which I found most interesting. This piece is so overworked as to be almost in the bromide department. I must say that the Middlechute pieces are scarcely the best American compositions extant, and suffered especially following Rubke. The Cellier work was excellent "bridge" music, and the performer's own work is so far fascinating show case on a well-known theme in which the composer-organist accomplished his own requirements with apparent ease. The concluding piece was in my opinion rather anti-climactic.

Thrall-Ball is an accomplished artist whose abilities are as apparent as they are understated by him. The marriage of recitalist and instrument was eminently successful—the evening a rewarding experience.

R.B.

Friday

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
High Mass: The Paxful Choristers; the Rev. Joseph R. Foley, chaplain; Frank Campbell-Watson, organist.

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Ode 1
Medieval music
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Studio of Organ
TRENDS IN EUROPEAN ORGAN-BUILDING was the subject of a lecture by D. A. Flintrop, Dr. Robert Baker, Dean of the New York City Chapter, of the American Organists' Association. The organ building industry was discussed, with special emphasis on the influence of the new organ designs on church architecture. Flintrop stressed the importance of considering the space and acoustics of the building when designing an organ. He also discussed the use of new materials and the importance of maintaining historical accuracy in organ building. The lecture concluded with a demonstration of several organs, highlighting their unique features and sound qualities.

The American Organist
I was especially impressed with the injunction to present the architect with problems, not solutions. Most churches are prone to give answers, rather than questions, with disconcerting results; and we have plenty of churches across the land to prove it.

Mr. Berry was joined, after his talk, by Bertram Y. Kinsley, his colleague on the AGO Committee on Architecture and Acoustics, for an active question-and-answer forum period.

In his concluding remarks, Ray Berry offered his and Mr. Kinsley’s services to AGO chapters, to bring the message of acoustics to chapters, area architects, clergy and church building committees anywhere in the nation—to bring and present information where it is needed, on home ground.

H. K.

Anyone wishing information on booking Mr. Berry or Mr. Kinsley, for lecture-recitals, with slides and other similar such, may secure this by writing the TAO offices. The Editor.
EMILY ANN COOPER, of Arkadelphia, Arkansas, a pupil of Robert Ellis at Henderson College in the same city, was the winner of the 1936 national organ competition for students. Her recital, played in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, was as follows:

Allegro (Sonata 6) Bach
Largo y piacevole (Concerto in D minor) Vivaldi-Bach
Pugno a la Gigue Bach
Cantabile Pianist
Scherzo (Symphonie 2) Viereck
Introitsson, Passacaglia and Fugue

Miss Cooper's recital was a tour de force. She played with the technical facility and vitality of youth and with fine command of the instrument. Some small points that caused me to think for a moment were the cadences in the opening and recapitulation of the Trio Sonata, and the phrasing of the arpeggio passages; the use of 10 stops with sub-couplers was using full organ; the fly that walked over the organ in the Wilton Fugue; and the slightly staccato Clarinet in the Viereck.

Some big things that gave satisfaction were the technical command of the difficult Trio; the colorful registrations; the effervesence and dash of the Scherzo; and the general artistry and musicianship.

It is worth mentioning, for the benefit of those who haven't heard the organ in St. Mary's, that the instrument is a very high and picturesque structure into the church; the effect is bright and clear, and, to many, one of the loveliest sounds of its kind in New York.

A. C. B.

St. Bartholomew's Church, Clarence

Raphael Michaelovitch

Symphony No. 3

RAFAEL MADER, the west coast's sole residentist representative, played a program of contemporary works on convention Friday at St. Bartholomew's Church. The program ran in two parts: the Raphael Michaelovitch piece leaves me equally so indifferent as concerning it is concerned. Mader's own Portrait Cycle contained some highly interesting compositional thought even though I join Mr. Lawrence Swanyard in that 'Of Understanding' was not precisely. I cannot help but feel that Mader's ideas of children and of youth make me less than hopeful for the world of tomorrow. Again agreeing with Mr. Swanyard, the Swanyard, the Vaughan Symphony simply is not.

As will be noted elsewhere in this, question looms distressingly large as to just what the present-day composer is attempting—what he is trying to prove. I do not pretend to sit in judgment but I do feel that music is no different today, than it ever has been: it will never be music which laments the future until it goes considerably further beyond mere mental aberrations. The wedding of head and heart to compositional thinking has so far as I know not approached the divorce court.

Claudia Mader, a gentleman and I mean gentleman, to whom I would hear playing a more orthodox program, his talents more than deserve this. I have the greatest admiration for his willingness to accomplish the program he played but I wish he could have delineated his considerate ability in music more agreeable to listen to, music which is more than avant garde for the sake of being that, only.

R.B.

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

FROM the opening notes of the first of the organ preludes, all of us in the congregation in Temple Emanuel knew that the service was going to be musically rewarding. Dr. Robert Baker chose some extremely effective and new music for the preludes, and he played this entire recital with the utmost artistry and superb effect. I could not help but marvel at the fact of Dr. Baker's excellent effort having to be sandwiched in with all of his other extensive duties, and so I should say that his accomplishment showed real genius.

Not to be mundane in speaking of personalities, I have never heard the Temple organ sound so well; and this is not simply because Dr. Baker has been playing there for several years (and was chiefly responsible for the rebuilding of the organ), but rather because he is superbly musical and musically.

The choir at the Temple is equally as good as the organist. It is unfortunate that most of us never hear a good choir sing a Jewish Service, since it has become customary for these services to be sung by solo quartets (most of which are better suited to the opera house than the Synagogue); but, if there has been any doubt that such a good choir could exist and sing such a service, it was quickly dispelled by this performance in the Temple. They were really one of the finest choral groups in New York City. Their tone, balance, blend, dynamic control and all such mechanics are superb; and their interpretative powers show a magnificent under- standing of what they are singing. It was thrilling to hear such excellent performance.

Literally, my impression is that music in Reformed Jewish Worship is dominated by performance rather than participation. The congregation does a great deal of reading, most of it responsive, but I have never heard any successful hymn singing or the like, and I understand that when this is tried it is not especially rewarding. There were some moments when I felt that the organ music during solemn moments of great function smacked vaguely of what we in Christian liturgical churches call "mod music," but Dr. Baker performed such in the best of taste, not marring it for every drop.

Amid the favorable comment on all sides, apparently I was the only one who felt this, so obviously the concert emphasis of all the music in Temple Emanuel was vastly successful, even in this light. Many crowds for a most rewarding experience.

J. F.
In Memoriam — G. Donald Harrison

MEMORIAL TRIBUTES to the late G. Donald Harrison, immediately following his tragic death on June 14, 1956, were the following:

At the service in St. Thomas Church, New York, held simultaneously with the funeral service on Long Island, William Self, organist and master of the choristers, played before this is the logical closing affair, is a more question. was the grand entrance of the 60th anniversary cake, boste on the shoulders of a couple of stewarts, and followed in red-coated lengthy procession by waiters bearing a super luxuriant.

Speeches, praise be, were non-existent. The words of the brad Robert Baker, President Elmer, Claire Coci covered all territory needing recognition, were expeditiously done so the main attraction of the evening could arrive on stage. Anna Russell is, I trust, too familiar an entertainer to require description. While hampered slightly by an accompanist unfamiliar with her manuscripts and routines who yet accounted able for himself, she had not the slightest trouble in reducing her many hundred listeners to a weak and screaming mass. I would place my seal of approval on Anna Russell as being the best possible manner of assiting in the digestive processes of a large crowd.

While she is quite accustomed to audiences who scream their insistence for encore, and repeated bows, I rather doubt she has ever had a more discerning audience which could so expertly assimilate and appreciate much of her astonishingly pointed satire. I might mention that the one man who sat at the altar table to me and who never once cracked a smile during her performance should con- suit her next psychia-trist. Obviously, he is not quite human.

As all of as left the tables in the main ballroom of the Waldorf, saying our goodbyes to friends and all that, I rather imagine many of us had the same feeling: even though we might be dead on our feet, we had been exposed to a really terrific five days. I choose to believe that, in most ways, the marathon was worth it. R.B.

SAMUEL LEWIS ELMER, D. H. L.
On Sunday, June 3, President Merrill J. Holmes of Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois, conferred upon AEG President S. Lewis Elmer the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. The presentation citation, read by Carl Neumeyer, was as follows:

Long recognized as a leader in the field of sacred music, Dr. Elmer served for thirty years until his retirement in 1937 as organist and choirmaster of the Memorial Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York. Early in his professional career in 1901 he became identified with the American Guild of Organists and has played an increasing: ly active role in that organization until the present time. In 1944 he became the president of this national organization. His outstanding leadership and wholehearted de-
The American Organist expresses a debt of gratitude to the distinguished editor of the English journal Musical Opinion and The Organist for his highly individualistic and perceptive commentary on the recent AGO convention.

Sunday, June 24.

6:00 pm. Picked up my registration at the Waldorf-Astoria with tickets for all events kindly placed at my disposal by the New York Chapter AGO whose guest I am. The program is terrific in this heat! I shall need wings to get around all the events and by the time the week is over I shall probably have acquired them—plus a harp! (Nearly 2,000 organists! Talk about Daniel in the lion's den!)

8:30 pm. To St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, for a pre-convention concert by the Oratorio Society of New Jersey. Very resonant building which ruined diction of otherwise magnificent choral singing. The matter of performance was less engaging than the manner. RobertEminger's "Three Exhortations" is pretentious music, constantly striving after modernity through dissonance but making its greatest effect in one quiet diatonic passage. Organ accompaniment was too orchestral, ignoring the inherent medium of the instrument. There were some magnificent outbursts of choral and organ sound, a duet for chorus and organ—nay, a duet, in which the organ won. The best of the three numbers did not publicly acknowledge a debt to Walton's "Belshazzar." It but should have done. In "The Green Blade Riseth," Sarale Wrights derived his inspiration from Walton (he says so in the program). The four numbers of the work, although strikingly contrasted in style (Resurrection Paean—magnificent choral climax; Aria—"Sleeping Waters:" Choral (seriously moving emotion; Alleluia—short baritonal finale), have an affinity which owes much (to the use of a plain-song theme borrowed from Walton's "Henry V" John music (I still think it's the Agincourt Hymn, Mr. Wright!).

The third and last item was Frank Schreier's "Consolation on the Crucifixion" which is not so much a contemplation as a dramatic passage of the Passion, told in alternate of choral and narrator, the choral portions acting as commentary. The narrative is in free recitative, more reminiscent of Handel than of Bach. It was a work of considerable change from the stereotyped neo-classical pattern, developing here and there into pure lyricism, both in the vocal line and in the organ accompaniment. Nevertheless the work as a whole lacked cohesion and was overlong for its tick of a personal idiom and tension. Mr. Schreier's music is highly derivative, varying from Schubert and Mendelssohn, to Knecht,Eｌeｔｔ and Reger with a touch or Messiaen and Langais here and there. The organ did everything that one would expect a Donald Harrisons instrument to do (and a good deal more than it ought to have done, now and then).

Monday, 10 am.

To Calvary Episcopal Church for the finals of the Student Competition in organ playing. Each student seemed to present a Bach work and a modern piece, varying from Sowerby to Messiaen. I heard four of them and understood there were 75 or 20 competitors. (The judges must be gullots for punishment!) Technical proficiency was very high, but the students seemed more at home with the mediums than with Bach. It is far easier to paint in color than to draw in black and white.

4:30 pm—to the official opening and recital, by Pierre Cochereau, at St. Thomas Church. It embarrassed me somewhat to face near 1,500 American organists to convey my messages of goodwill from across the sea, but my reception here has been so friendly that the rows of smiling faces have put me at my ease. Under Cochereau's skillful hands and feet, Donald Harrison's last achievement in organ design produced the right voices for a program of French music, from the quaint Bayennne tapestry outlines of the Chenerault "Suite" to the reverberating total masses of Duprez. The recitalist improvised with great skill, ingenuity and musicianship on three themes submitted. The improvisation was perhaps over-long at the tail end of a large-scale recital, but it is always a pleasure to listen to this art, today perpetuated only in the French church and long neglected by the Anglo-Saxon race. I fancy we should have a better standard of organ composition in England and America if we taught improvisation.

Tuesday, 11 am.

Choral Morning Prayer at St. Thomas Church. What a delight to hear a well-trained choir of boys and men, but strange to hear boys sing the alto line after the customary sound of the English male alto voice. Boys have a kind of dead flatness tone in this register. I enjoyed particularly the unaccompanied early English and Italian—Tallis, Weelkes, d Lasso, Lotti and Palestrina. The singing was comparable to good English cathedral standards (I wonder what William Self will say when he loses that wonderful solo boy?). One jarring note was struck by Norman Cape-Jephson's "Introduction, Interludes, Descant, Free Accompaniment and Fanfare" to Croft's "O God our help." The descant was quite good but the fanfare (no doubt designed for the "State Trumpet") was the worst piece of bombast in bad taste I have ever heard.

2:30 pm. Joint organ recital by Donald McDonald and George Melen. We were both given a free hand to build a magnificent 5-manual instrument and then bury it in the walls so that the tone has to fight its way out through closely-glazed windows spaces. Mr. McDonald played Bach, using baroque registration discreetly where necessary and also that magnificent "Introduction, Passagia and Aria" by Henry Purcell (which he unusually, was just another toccata).

5:30 pm. Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Recital by Charlotte Gardner. Any organist who plays in St. John's should be paid danger money lest the players reputation be damaged by playing to the clicking acoustics of the building with its 9 seconds of reverberation. It is almost impossible to tell that a change has been made in registration until some time after the event has occurred and some of a previous higher dynamic has died. I therefore refuse to comment on any of the variety of composition for organ and brass ruined by that acoustic muddle which never allowed one to hear the choir at all. I observe that the cathedral is not yet finished. In my opinion, New York should pull it down and replace it with a building in which music is in the same key. I assume Mr. Swinyard would insist with equal intensity that St. Paul's, London, with its alleged 12-second reverberation environment, should also be replaced with an acoustic logical for speech and music. The Editor.] Why do so many
American churches shut out the daylight with too much ornamental stained glass and so obscure their often beautiful pronunciation? Is gloominess next to holiness in the U. S. A.?

Wednesday, 10 am.

The President's breakfast was somewhat late (no doubt because "cover-up" prayers of the Milkman's Matins!). The business meeting was an eyesore to me with its reports from regions, states and chapters of a very keen and flourishing activity amongst organists all over the United States. One thing that has surprised me is the large number of women members of the AGO, many of them as deans of chapters or state chairsmen! For players among them, are too. In England, a fair proportion of women accompany the organ clubs on their Saturday afternoon organ-hunts, but they are mostly the wives of organists. We call them "consolate widows!" From the reports of the several area conventions with their organ and choral workshops, I have picked up many ideas to suggest for adoption in England. I think the Incorporated Association of Organists has something to learn from the AGO.

1:30 pm. I was very disappointed with Willbur Held's recital of the AGO test pieces at Central Presbyterian Church. He played all the pieces but almost entirely without phrasing and with no imagination whatever in registration. The music did not impress Mr. Held and the recital was certainly no inspiration to any student preparing for his examination. For such a demonstration only a front-room recitalist should be chosen.

3 pm. The Forum on Teaching Methods and Materials would no doubt have been interesting if I could have heard a word of what the speakers said, but in the absence of a public address system, I succumbed to the beat and left early.

4:30 pm. At Alexander Schreiner's recital I heard the first real organ playing of this whole convention. No chinks of sound barrel enough to the "hangovers" from registration, historically appropriate, and obviously selected with a view towards that from such moller specification. Phrasing, particularly in the pedal line and the left-hand inner parts, was meticulous so that the music took shape, each phrase had beauty of form. Whether in building up the architeconic majesty of the Bach Passacaglia or in the music of van Hulst and Vicente, Mr. Schreiner showed himself to be an artist as well as a technician, and many young American recitalists might well copy his style.

8:30 pm. This is the first time in my life that I have ever attended an open air concert as in the vast Lewisohn Stadium with its amplified sound. I don't think I like it. For one thing, I have been campaigning for years against the use of huge orchestral and choral forces in such music as Bach's Magnificat and Handel's Concertos. What is the use of a highly trained choir of 40 if it is amplified to sound like 400? And why play Handel's organ concerto (true chamber music) with full Beethoven orchestras including trumpets? I don't think my countryman, George Thalben-Ball, was at all happy on that Allen organ! Claire Coci did much better with the frankly romantic DeLaMatter work. Pleasant concert music this for the open air on a summer night. Soloists and chorus sang well but Mr. Stockland will have to get on to the question of tone production. Again here was that sense of strained voices and forced tone, and the microphone seems to emphasize the barber upper harmonics of the human voice.

Thursday, 1:50 pm.

E. Power Biggs and an instrumental ensemble at the Hunter College Auditorium. Careful! I'm going to write a rave notice! After being bathed by various varieties of full organ, almost drowned in various varieties of "baths of sound," I came up to breathe and to consciousness on Thursday afternoon. The English stomach can get used to the large American meals and the parallel carries over into music. To a mind suffering from mental indigestion as a result of a surplus of great chunks of tone from Audion-Skimmers, Cavaans, Mollers and other huge and small organs, Mr. Biggs' recital had an astringent and purgative effect. The little Schlicker portative was heard with ease in the large auditorium and its two manual flexibility is a delight. Mr. Biggs has obviously studied his historic periods well and succeeded well also in evoking many contrasts of tone from his tiny instrument. What made the music come alive was the careful phrasing, the variation of touch—whether of hands or feet. High praise is also due to the six instrumentalists who played—not to us but to the composers and for themselves—and, consequently, with E. Power Biggs, they really made music.

8:30 pm. I heard my fellow countryman, George Thalben-Ball, play this same program on the Royal Festival Hall organ. It sounded better in London where the organ has a chance to speak, instead of being buried as it is in Temple Emanu-El. G. T. B. is undoubtedly our finest British recitalist. It was a pity that the audience could not see him playing that splendidly.

Friday, 10:30 am.

Seth Bingham presided ably over the lecture-forum on "Music for the Small Church" and evidently you have in America the same problems as we do in choir organization, training and music selection. But it seems to me that you tackle those same problems in a much more business-like manner. Church music with you is a highly organized matter and, judging by the success of Mr. van Hulst and Vicente, Mr. Schreiner showed himself to be an artist as well as a technician, and many young American recitalists might well copy his style.

3 pm. To St. Bartholomew's to hear Clarence Mader, one of the leading west coast organists. Someone told me that Mr. Mader is one of the avant garde, which, I suppose, and as much as I respect Mr. Mader's program, well played on a fine instrument, did not appeal to me so much. This much of modern dissertation composition is merely modern and merely dissonant. Odd screeches and phrases flop up, heading nowhere, except perhaps to a climax full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Mr. Mader's own new work, "Portrait Cycle," is not of great interest and the one movement which I could not understand at all was entitled "Of Understanding." The kindest thing I can say about Clifford Vaughan's "Symphony" is that it's not. 8 pm. I don't remember very much about the convention banquet. I think American hospitality must have made me a little drunk. In fact the one impression which I am taking back to England is the friendliness of this convention, which made a stranger in a strange land feel at ease and at home from the very first. I feel that I have a host of new friends (about 1,600, I believe) and I want to say thank you to all of them and particularly to Miss L. Smith and the New York City Chapter AGO, my kind and generous hosts for the week.